

2012 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Eligibility & Criteria

What is the Achievement Award Program?

The Achievement Award Program is a non-competitive awards program which seeks to recognize innovative county government programs. Outstanding programs from each category may be selected for the Best of Category Award.

What is Required to Apply?

For each program being nominated, general entry information and the nomination summary must be uploaded online. For more information on these application parts, please see the How to Apply section.

Who is Eligible to Submit Applications?

Only county governments and state associations of counties are eligible to submit applications. There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted.

What are the Eligibility Standards?

All applications must comply with the four following standards:

1. The program must have become operational after January 1, 2007, and must have measurable results.
2. County officials and/or staff, as part of their official duties, must have played a significant role in developing and implementing the program, with only limited assistance from outside technical experts and/or consultants.
3. All steps in the application process must be completed and all application fees must be paid in full.
4. The program must meet the criteria outlined below.

What are the Program Criteria?

The nominated program must meet the following criteria:

1. It must do one or more of the following:
 - Offer a new service to county residents, fill gaps in the availability of existing services, or tap new revenue sources;
 - Improve the administration or enhance the cost effectiveness of an existing county government program;
 - Upgrade the working conditions or level of training for county employees;
 - Enhance the level of citizen participation in, or the understanding of, government programs;
 - Provide information that facilitates effective public policy making; or

- Promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems.
- 2. In the case of a program that is in response to a federal or state law, regulation, or order, the program must go beyond mere compliance with the statute, regulation or order, and must display a creative approach to meeting those requirements.
- 3. The program must have proven measurable results (e.g. cost savings, enhanced employee productivity, improved constituent service, created better intergovernmental cooperation).
- 4. The program must be innovative and not rely on the application of techniques or procedures that are common practice in most counties of similar population size.
- 5. All aspects of the program must be consistent with acceptable governmental and financial management practices and must promote general governmental accountability.

Ineligible Programs Include:

- Programs designed to influence laws and regulations; Certification or accreditation programs;
- Onetime events such as conducting a conference, or formation of a task force or committee;
- Programs that are adopted, whole or in part, from another public or private entity;
- Programs (either whole or in substantial part) that have received a previous Achievement Award;
- Programs that involve the automation of a function, the purchase/utilization of new technology/equipment, the construction of a building or the privatization/contracting out of a function;
- Programs that involved the relocation of facilities or staff or the hiring of additional staff;
- The publication of a newsletter; or
- The application of targeted federal or state funds as required.

Award Categories

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| ➤ Children and Youth | ➤ Financial Management |
| ➤ Civic Education and Public Information | ➤ Health |
| ➤ Criminal Justice and Public Safety | ➤ Human Services |
| ➤ Community/Economic Development | ➤ Information Technology |
| ➤ County Administration and Management | ➤ Personnel Management, Employee Training and Employee Benefits (for county employees) |
| ➤ Emergency Management and Response | ➤ Planning |
| ➤ Employment and Training (for county residents) | ➤ Risk Management |
| | ➤ Transportation |
| | ➤ Volunteers |

Provide Nomination Summary

The nomination summary must:

- Be no more than eight typed pages.
 - Be written in layman's terms, so that the average reader can understand the objectives and judge the merits of the program. NACo reserves the right to disqualify programs whose summaries are too technical.
 - Be well written. Poorly written applications that do not address the seven issues below are subject to disqualification.
 - Have measurable results. NACo reserves the right to disqualify programs that are submitted prematurely and without measurable results.
 - Have the name of the program, and the county and state submitting the application on the top of each page. Pages should also be numbered.
 - In the summary of the nominated program, the following eight items must be addressed in a number by number format.
 - Failure to address any of these items may result in your application's disqualification. (Suggested page guidelines are provided below).
1. **Abstract of the Program** -- In approximately 200 words or less, summarize your program including the program description, function and results (approximately 1/4 page). Abstracts of award winning programs will be published, so please be sure that what you have written is comprehensive, but concise.
 2. **The Problem/Need for the Program** -- Discuss the problem/need that prompted the development of the program and the county's legal obligation, if any, to take action (approximately 3/4 page).
 3. **Description of the Program** -- Provide a description of the nominated program, including its objectives, the time frame for development and implementation, the clientele being served, the county's role in devising and implementing the program, and the contribution, if any, of other partners (e.g., state and federal government, consultants, private partner(s) (approximately 2 to 3 pages).
 4. **Responding to Economic Downturn (Optional)** -- If applicable, describe how this program responded to recent county budget constraints or addressed the county's new economic reality. This question is optional and may not apply to all programs. (Approximately 3/4 page).
 5. **Use of Technology** -- Describe all items of technology that your program utilized in its implementation. This could include intranet, internet, website, GIS, GPS, cable, kiosks, software, LAN, WAN, databases, etc. You may provide this information in a list or paragraph form. This information will be useful in helping NACo highlight how big a role information technology plays in local community programs (approximately 1/4 page).
 6. **The Cost of the Program** -- Describe both the operating and capital costs incurred in developing and implementing the program (list all costs that would be incurred by a county attempting to replicate the program) (approximately 3/4 to 1 page).

7. **The Results/Success of the Program** -- Provide a description of the results and the success of the program in meeting its objectives (provide specific examples and measurements of that success) (approximately 3/4 to 1 page).
8. **Worthiness of an Award** -- Give justification for why this program meets outlined criteria and should be awarded a 2011 Achievement Award (approximately 1/4 to 1/2 pages).

Provide General Entry Information

1. **Program Category** -- Identify one of the awards categories (see page 1) for your nominated program. Please choose one category from the list. Note that the selection of a program category should be determined by the content of the program, not by the organizational department. If you feel your application fits into two or more categories, please choose one category that best covers the main topic area of your program.
2. **Contact Information** -- Provide contact information for the nominated program. Include name, mailing address, phone and fax number, and e-mail.
3. **Program Title** -- Should your program win an Achievement Award, the program title you provide is exactly what will appear on the certificate. The title should be no more than 75 characters and should not include the county name because the county name automatically appears on the certificate.